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Eight approaches to the teaching of elementary reading are described briefly. The Executive Committee of the Department of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Education of the National Education Association selected the approaches to be discussed. They include (1) Language Experience Approach by R. V. Allen, (2) Phonic Approach by Charles E. Wingo, (3) Basal Reading Series by A. Sterl Artley, (4) Individualized Approach by Willard C. Olson, (5) Multilevel Reading Instruction by Don H. Parker, (6) Initial Teaching Alphabet by Sir James Pitman, (7) Words in Color by Dorothea E. Hinman, and (8) Linguistics in Beginning Reading by Charles C. Fries. These statements provide a spectrum of current thinking and discussion in the field of reading and offer an opportunity for teachers, curriculum committees, college and university teachers and students, and other groups and individuals to examine these approaches within a common framework. References are included. (Author/RT)

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LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH R. V. Allen

PHONIC APPROACH Charles E. Wingo

BASAL READING SERIES A. Sterl Artley

INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH Willard C. Olson

MULTILEVEL READING INSTRUCTION Don H. Parker

INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET Sir James Pitman

WORDS IN COLOR Dorothea E. Hinman

LINGUISTICS IN BEGINNING READING Charles C. Fries

EDITED BY Helen K. Mackintosh

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The statements that follow describe eight approaches to the teaching of reading as it is carried on in the elementary schools of the United States today. These particular points of view were selected by the Executive Committee of the Department of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Education of the National Education Association. Although others might have been chosen, those that do appear may be thought of as a spectrum of current thinking and discussion in the field of teaching reading.

Each approach included is representative of a particular point of view and has been prepared by a person whose name is closely associated with the method, either historically or by reason of present support of it. Since the length of the leaflet is limited, each author who agreed to cooperate was asked to prepare a 350-word objective description of the characteristics of the particular approach he was to present. This limitation of words necessarily confines the presentations to the distinctive features of each of the approaches included.

It is believed that these statements will provide an opportunity for teachers, curriculum committees, college and university teachers and students, and other groups and individuals to examine these approaches within a common framework.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

R. V. Allen, University of Arizona

The language experience approach in reading instruction recognizes that the oral language background of each child is a basic ingredient in word recognition throughout the grades. In a language experience program—

> the thinking of each child is valued→which leads to expressing his thinking in oral language→which can be represented in written form (or dictated)→which can be reconstructed (read) by the author→which leads to reconstruction of written language of others→which should influence thinking and oral language of the reader so that his spelling, writing, and reading improve.

More than other experience programs, the language experience approach has a basic framework of language experiences serving as a device for screening and selecting activities that contribute to balanced development of communication skills and attitudes. The 20 language experiences which form the framework of the program were identified in the San Diego County Reading Research Project. They include three major emphases: (a) extending experiences to include words that express them—through oral and written sharing of personal experiences, discussing selected topics, listening to and telling stories, writing independently, and making and reading individual books; (b) studying the English language—through developing an understanding of speaking, reading, and writing relationships, expanding vocabularies, reading a variety of symbols in the environment, improving style and form of personal expression, studying words, and gaining some awareness of the nature of the English language (use of high frequency words and English sentence patterns); and (c) relating ideas of authors to personal experiences—through reading whole stories and books, learning to use a variety of printed resources, summarizing, outlining, reading for specific purposes, and determining the validity and reliability of statements.

Language, which in the beginning is natural and normal speech, matures to the point where one can communicate effectively in a society which values both divergent-type and convergent-type thinking. The individual can use his own language to express his own ideas. When he has gained enough understanding of the English language in its written form to reconstruct (read) the ideas of others, he can use reading as a useful tool to extend his information, organize his thinking, and furnish recreation.

PHONIC APPROACH

Charles E. Wingo, Monmouth College

Reading with Phonics, a system of phonics integrating all the language arts, was developed by the late Julie Hay, Mary C. Hletko, and Charles E. Wingo, resulting from 54 years of research and practice. It is currently used as a guide or language architectural plan to construct some forty unwritten Filipino tribal languages.

Reading with Phonics is a system which develops efficiency in word recognition by employing a multisensory approach and a sequential introduction of speech sounds of the English language. All the language arts are integrated to provide broad approaches to use of unlimited vocabularies.

Reading with Phonics utilizes the 44 most frequently used speech sounds in English. It begins with the teaching of short sounds of 5 vowels and progresses to the study of 10 most frequently used consonants. In each early lesson a consonant is blended with the 5 vowels in pronouncing units or syllables, then word wholes. Progression is always from known to unknown, from simple to more complex. Words are always attacked at their beginnings, promoting left to right eye progression.

Reading with Phonics provides the child with a reading vocabulary approximately equal to his speaking vocabulary. Logically, as the child's mastery grows, one complements the other, providing the key to all basic communication—the foundation for his entire education.

This program of instruction in word recognition is designed for use with *all* basal reading series. It provides exercises and activities related to the entire language arts program—handwriting, reading, spelling, expression. It has no grade level designation. Since it is a complete phonics program, it may be used in the kindergarten, primary, and intermediate grades. It should be introduced in kindergarten or first grade to establish proper word-attack skills for independent, fluent readers at the earliest possible age. Reading with Phonics has proven of great use in the upper grades in creating awareness of the relation between speech sounds

and printed letters, thus providing the disabled reader with a valuable reading tool.

Reading with Phonics is an important language tool, which has made its own outstanding contribution to the fields of reading, language arts, and language structure.

BASAL READING SERIES

A. Sterl Artley, University of Missouri

A basal reading program carried on through the use of a series of basal materials is concerned with the systematic and sequential development of all the skills, abilities, and understandings necessary for interpreting written symbols. As such, it might be characterized by one word, *comprehensive.* It is concerned with growth in *all* aspects of the reading act. These include word perception, comprehension, critical and emotional reaction, and the application and use of reading for recreation and practical purposes. Through the sequential skill program provided in a basal series and the type of content used, children grow in reading as a process and through reading as an avenue to increasingly higher levels of personal and social development.

Three objectives—scope, sequence, and organization—guide the development of a basal reading series. Scope concerns the range of skills that the maturing reader needs to acquire and the content types and themes with which he needs to become acquainted. Sequence deals with the order given to the teaching of the various elements with which the program is concerned, so that each developmental stage grows out of those preceding and at the same time serves as a foundation for the ones following. Organization brings into proper relation learners, skills, teaching methods, and instructional materials so as to ensure a program having unity and coherence.

Two things must be understood, however, if basal materials are to be an effective part of a total reading program. First, the teacher must be able to make adaptations in the use of basal materials in keeping with the learning rates of the pupils, their backgrounds of experience, and their levels of skill mastery. A basal program is not a prescription but a base of operations.

Second, the teacher must be able to supplement the basal program with a wide variety of materials—trade books, magazines, reference books, etc.—on various levels of readability to meet the personal interests and needs of all the learners. As important as a basal series may be to systematic and sequential reading growth, it should be considered as only part of a well-rounded reading program.

INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH

Willard C. Olson, University of Michigan

The individualized approach to reading finds more guides to practice from within the child than from extrinsic considerations of learning or reading method. Individualized methods are natural outgrowths and theoretical extensions of the results of developmental studies. Most practitioners of individualized instruction use a multiple approach.

Back of practices are axioms noting that sequences of development are uniform, rates are highly variable, and individual differences are inevitable. By the time children enter kindergarten or first grade they will differ by several years in readiness for reading. As children grow into the culture, they learn speech without formal instruction. Similarly, more rapid growers are advanced in elements of the reading process before they enter school. By five years of age some children are reading.

In individualized reading the teacher continues a cultural approach. Appropriate books for browsing are available from the beginning. There is conversation, storytelling, and reading aloud. Simple labels and sentences help to identify things or experiences. The teacher will provide in the classroom, often with child participation, a supply of books varied in range of difficulty and interest. Ideally, there will be access to a larger supply. From the books children will seek according to their readiness, needs of the moment, and general interest. Rapid growers will seek many and difficult books, and slow growers, few and simple ones.

The individualized approach emphasizes success and satisfaction for the learner and asks for constructive language and approval techniques from the teacher. The teacher has no common expectation for children and little faith in effectiveness of grouping or special methods designed to have children learn more, earlier. Formal remediation is expected to be effective only in instances of earlier deprivation. Forcing methods are expected to result only in equivalence at a later period.

It is impossible to claim tested superiority for any method. Individual differences persist because of such factors as selective uptake, retention, and utilization. Sustained motivation and satisfaction are characteristic of flexible approaches.

The emphasis on the dynamic concepts of seeking, self-selection, and pacing may be expected to produce results that will be competitive with those of other methods.

MULTILEVEL READING INSTRUCTION

Don H. Parker, Emlimar, Big Sur, Calif.

Studies of reading process, children, and learning provide the basis for multilevel reading instruction. Studies of *reading process* indicate existence of specific skills which each child must acquire and put together if he is to progress through various levels of reading efficiency throughout his school years and beyond. These reading skills can be arranged on a continuum from easy to difficult, simple to complex. Studies of *children* show clearly that each child needs different kinds and amounts of help in acquiring each skill because of the different cultural background, learning capacity, and learning rate that each individual brings to the task of reading. Studies of *learning* show that certain mental processes must take place in the mind of the learner, or there is no learning.

In view of these facts about reading, children, and learning, how does a teacher provide reading instruction for 25 or 30 pupils, develop a continuum of the basic reading skills, encourage each child to move along this skill track as fast and as far as *his* learning rate and capacity will permit, and make sure the learning process is operating effectively for each and every child? These were the teachers' problems with 18 million students, grades 1-12, helped during 15 years by the multilevel reading instruction program of SRA Laboratories.

In this type of program, the teacher introduces the learning laboratory process to the class and supervises it individually. Through a placement test, each child starts on the skill track at a point where he can achieve success with effort. Continuous built-in testing gives the pupil feedback, reinforcement, or redirection of his learning efforts. Self-programming frees the teacher to help each child as needed.

The pupil learns the names and sounds of the ordinary English alphabet, its phonic and structural sight-sound combinations, and linguistic word patterning as units of thought. He then goes on to decoding meanings from more complex (symbolic) units (paragraphs, stories, chapters).

Paralleling this multilevel individualized reading instructional program, the pupil moves readily into individualized reading, selecting books at his own level for pleasure or study, for a balance between skill-getting and skill-using.

INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET

Sir James Pitman, London, England

The Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) of 44 characters provides each major phoneme of English with its own symbol, thus eliminating the inconsistent character-to-symbol relationship in present spelling. This alphabet, with its spellings, provides the learner with a consistent alphabetic code. It differs from other phonemic alphabets in that both ITA and its spellings were designed to facilitate transition to the regular traditional alphabet, once reading and language fluency is achieved. Since it is a *medium*, not a *method*, ITA can be used with any method of reading instruction.

The 44-letter ITA alphabet consists of 24 standard, lower-case, roman letters (omitting "q" and "x"), plus 20 additional characters. Giving each character only one lower-case *form* and one *sound* value eliminates approximately 2,000 confusing irregularities of traditional spelling. The child is not confronted with three separate shapes, "A," "a," "*a*," for a single letter and a single sound. In ITA there is only one *shape* for capital, lower-case, or script letters; the difference is in size only. Each character always represents its own sound.

In traditional spelling the "i" sound is spelled differently in *child*, *buy*, *try*, *eye*, *file*, *lie*, *high*, *aisle*, *island*, *guide*, and in other words. This example is but one of many. The regularity of ITA and the more frequent repetition of the fewer syllabic forms enable the beginner to learn the mechanics of reading and writing more quickly, so that learning to read—in fact, all learning—becomes, for him, a logical process.

The Initial Teaching Alphabet approach has been used for both beginning reading and remedial teaching in England since 1961 and in the United States since 1963, with wide application in both countries. In England, the United States, Canada, Australia, Africa, Israel, and the U.S.S.R., young and old demonstrate that they can make an effortless transfer from ITA to the traditional alphabet and its spellings.

Although ITA makes the reading process simpler, quicker, and more successful, the inventor never intended it to be a factor in the controversy concerning proper age of beginning to read. That decision must rest with educators.

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WORDS IN COLOR

Dorothea E. Hinman,
Encyclopaedia Britannica Press

Words in Color was originated by educator Caleb Gattegno to teach reading in a new and direct way.

Dr. Gattegno's experimentation began in 1957 in Ethiopia for UNESCO. His approach has dramatically reduced learning time in Amharic, Spanish, Hindi, and English. In California in 1961, he demonstrated that children learn to read English in a few weeks (6 to 12). In May 1964 in Washington, D.C., he demonstrated that only a few hours (9 to 20) of intensive work are required for adult illiterates.

The most important contribution of the approach is its full and rapid extension of the linguistic capacities of learners who already speak their language. The natural mental process of combining sounds and related meanings (spoken speech) is extended to include operations on related signs (written speech). The power of reading, writing, and spelling with meaning all language already owned as meaningful speech is developed *as a unity*. No one of these additional skills is worked upon separately. All come naturally and spontaneously as by-products of extended linguistic power. *Teaching is fully subordinated to learning.* The techniques and materials of the approach allow the teacher to initiate challenging and enjoyable intellectual games which provide practice, without creating boredom through drill or strain through memorization, and to generate self-direction and creativity in the development and use of written language.

Color is far less important than the trade name indicates, since all books and written work from the beginning are in black on white. The use of color *does* solve quickly and easily the problems created by the ambiguous grapheme-phoneme relationship of English *without affecting usual spelling:* thus on the wallcharts color provides a valuable clue and word imagery is more vivid. The many spellings of each sound occur in the same color, and the many sounds of one spelling occur each in a different color (each of the 47 sounds of English identified has its own color). Examples:

l*a*te, w*ay*, th*ey*, *eigh*t, str*aigh*t, v*ei*l, gr*ea*t, p*ai*l
(same sound, so in same color).
p*a*t, w*a*s, vill*a*ge, *a*ny, fat*a*l, sw*a*mp, *a*ll, *a*te, c*a*re
(different sounds, so in different colors).

Words in Color opens the way for a valuable new type of educational research—a study of people in the process of being aware of language.

LINGUISTICS IN BEGINNING READING

Charles C. Fries, Ann Arbor, Mich.

William Dwight Whitney's lectures of 1863 on *Principles of Linguistic Science* and his two books of 1867 and 1875 summarize the knowledge and understanding achieved by modern linguistics from 1820 to 1875. Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933) not only summarized advances of the following 50 years but led the way into recent developments of structural linguistics.

The following four statements attempt to indicate the specially stressed features of an approach to beginning reading that applies this linguistic knowledge.

1. The six-year-old school child understands spoken sentences in which the basic sentence patterns have, for their content, words that he knows. For the beginning reading material this child must recognize the written words in the sentence structures as those he already knows when he hears them spoken.

2. As the basic readiness requirement for beginning reading, the child must know the alphabet. He must be able to identify, by name, rapidly and accurately, the individual letters. He must also be able to determine immediately whether two sequences of two or three letters are alike or different in respect to both the individual letters that constitute each sequence and their order within each sequence.

3. English spelling, in its representation of English words, drastically shifted its basic principles from 1450 to 1600. It moved away from a representation that could be grasped in terms of correspondences between individual letters and individual sounds to a representation through spelling patterns. It made possible the "silent" letters of our etymological spelling as well as the differentiation, by spelling, of words having the same pronunciation.

These developments in English spelling provide a basis for a very different approach to the teaching of beginning reading. It features specifically, even from the very early steps, the making of independent "extensions" of the matrices to build the pupil's ability to read hundreds of words he has never seen written before.

4. Reading for meaning requires the building of *situation* meanings out of the words and sentences read. Beginning books without pictures compel the pupils to read for meanings rather than guess at words after looking at pictures.

SUMMARY

Each reader of the foregoing statements will interpret them in the light of his own background of experience, education, and beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning in relation to reading. Some approaches are relatively new; others have been developed over fifty years or more. Some have been in continuous use; others represent older ideas in new dress; and still others have only recently appeared in the reading spectrum. Several are the subjects of research studies.

It has never been possible in the history of reading in the United States to adopt any one approach exclusively. Freedom to choose, however, carries with it responsibility for an evaluation based on the needs of children in each situation. Every possible means should be used to meet the reading problems of all children, including the hard-to-reach and the talented child.

Evaluation cannot be limited to the use of test results. Careful observation of children's overt reactions, their choice of a wide variety of reading materials, and demonstrated success in using these purposefully represent important evidence.

Each reader of this leaflet must make his own decision concerning the relative values to children of each of the approaches reviewed here.

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